

The Résumé

Your resume is an important marketing tool. It is essentially an advertisement of your qualifications and abilities. Its purpose is not to get you a job, but to get you an interview for a job. It should entice prospective employers to want to meet you by highlighting what you can do for them with your experience, education, and skills.

Because employers may receive hundreds, even thousands, of resumes a week, it is important that yours be visually appealing and brief but informative. Keep it as short as possible. One page is best but never more than two. One page of well-organized, relevant information will say more about you than several pages of unnecessary details.

Typical resumes get 20–30 seconds of attention the first time through, so make it easy for the readers to find what they are looking for (see Layout & Format Tips box).

Format

Three Kinds To Choose From

Your first decision will be to choose an appropriate resume format. There are three formats for resumes: chronological, functional, and combination. Deciding what format to use is an important decision...so give this some thought. Choose the one that shows your experience to its best advantage.

Chronological

This is the traditional style resume that lists your professional experience chronologically, starting with your most recent position. The majority of resumes are written in this format, and this is also the format most employers are accustomed to seeing. This style is particularly effective in the following cases:

- You have professional experience in the field of interest.

The Resume and The Employer

When preparing your resume think about the employer's perspective:

- Keep the information relevant to the job you seek.
- Use clear, concise language and proper spelling and punctuation.
- Use present tense for current jobs; past tense for past jobs.
- Emphasize achievements and skills.
- Avoid pronouns (such as “I was the person who....”).
- Use action verbs (such as “Wrote and edited the weekly newsletter”).
- Be 100% honest and accurate.
- Never exaggerate or misrepresent yourself.
- Ask others to review a draft copy and give you suggestions.
- Update resume and tailor to the position you are currently seeking.

- You can demonstrate measurable results from their work activities - for example, “Marketed departmental events, resulting in 50% increase in attendance.”
- You’ve held impressive job titles, and/or have worked for big-name employers.

This format is excellent for people with steady work histories or previous jobs that relate closely to their career objective. It is not the best format for career changers, people with inconsistent work histories, or new entrants to the work force. To create a chronological resume, list each position you have held, starting with the most recent and working backward.

- Give the job title, name of the company, and number of years you worked there.
- Relate the duties and accomplishments of each job using action statements, not sentences.
- Be specific, but not too detailed.
- Three to five statements per job is usually sufficient.
- Describe jobs relevant to the position you are applying for more thoroughly than others.

Functional

This style resume became popular in the 1970's and 1980's but is still viewed skeptically by some employers. The functional resume format summarizes your professional "functions" or experience and avoids or minimizes your employment history. Keep this in mind: since employers are used to seeing chronological resumes, make sure you have a definite reason for selecting a functional resume format. This format is often used in the following instances:

- “Older workers”, since it minimizes dates.
- “Career changers”, since it outlines transferrable work skills.
- Recent graduates - they don’t have a lot of professional experience in their field, but they do have relevant coursework or training.
- “Returning employees” after an absence from the workforce, since it minimizes dates.
- You want to emphasize skills you have that haven’t been used in recent work experiences.

To create a functional resume:

- Identify three or four primary skills required for your target job.
- For each skill identify three to five concrete examples to demonstrate that ability.
- Use action phrases, not complete sentences.
- Arrange skill headings in order of importance, or to match a job's

requirements.

- End with a brief work history listing job titles, company names and years employed.

Combination

The combination resume utilizes the best components of the functional and chronological styles. More recently, the combination resume has included accomplishments under each position or function, rather than simply outlining duties and responsibilities. This style allows for flexibility in designing a resume.

With many variations, a common one is to begin with a chronological format, but then subdivide each job description into skill categories. Another variation uses the functional format, but lists where you were employed after each example of a skill.

Consider this style when:

- Each position you held involved a different job description.

"If you don't know where you're going, you might end up where you're headed."

—Dr. Rod Gilbert, professional trainer



Layout and Format Tips

- Indent and use bullets to break up paragraphs.
- Use white space to make the page visually appealing.
- Use bold type to bring attention to important information, but don't overuse it.
- Use one easy-to-read font.

- You have held internships or volunteer positions that directly relate to field of interest.

You decide which style resume will work best for you. Take some time to look at the examples here then pick the one that will best present what you have to offer.

Adapted from: Nebraska Careers and Education 2002,
Nebraska DOL and University of Minnesota Resume
Tutor <[http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/ecep/resume/
step2.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/ecep/resume/step2.htm)>



Combination Resume